

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

Have you ever noticed how often the command, “Do not be afraid...” recurs in the Christmas story?

When the angel came to Zechariah, the priest, to tell him that his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son called John - a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah - he said to him, **“Do not be afraid”**. Luke 1:13

Some months later, the angel Gabriel came to Mary to tell her she would be the mother of the Saviour, and said, **“Do not be afraid, Mary”**. Luke 1:30

When God spoke to Joseph in a dream, and explained to him how it was that Mary was expecting a child, he said, **“Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife”**. Matthew 1:20

When the angel appeared to the shepherds to tell them that the Saviour had been born, again the message was,

“Do not be afraid. I bring you a message of joy...” Luke 2:10

We are so conditioned to think of Christmas as a “cozy and cuddly time”, that all of this sounds at odds with what Christmas is all about. And yet, for many people, within the life of our church or wider community, Christmas can be a time when fears, regrets and sorrows come to the surface; the first Christmas without a loved one, the first Christmas after a relationship breakup, the loss of a job or an unwanted change in circumstances. The uncertainty that surrounds our country at this time can also hang over our celebrations with the awareness that once the tree and tinsel are packed away, a new year will face us, with all the challenges that brings.

That is why it is so vital for the church, and individual Christians, to sound the note of **JOY** and **GOOD NEWS** that is at the heart of the story. The same God who spoke those words, **Do not be afraid...** is the One who speaks the same message of hope to us. At first, that may sound trite. A little like, “Cheer up!” or the sort of thing you might read in a book about positive thinking or mindfulness! How can we be sure that what we have here is not yet another cheap cure for life’s ills?

The fact is that the Good News of Christmas is grounded in the quite stupendous event of the incarnation. In Christ, God entered our world. And a world as it really is, not as portrayed on the snowy white Christmas cards! He has walked in our shoes. He has suffered as we suffer. He dies, as we die. And because through it all, He triumphed where we so utterly fail, He has the power and authority to say to us,

“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!” Revelation 1:17

Winter 2018



Jesus was no smooth talker. Nor did he deal in platitudes. That is why Christmas is the one occasion when we need not put a brave face on things, not if we take the Christmas story seriously. Rather it is a time for unflinching honesty, when we confront our fears which may be real enough, with those words that God spoke to perplexed and troubled people that first Christmas, and throughout Christ's earthly ministry.

"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 14:1 16:33

With much love and best wishes this Christmas season

From "The Manse Family"



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. John 1:5

Armistice Day 11 November 1918

Moya Hamilton

Armistice Day 1918 marked the end of four long years of conflict and heartbreak for so many. Overall, more than 700,000 members of the UK armed forces died and over two million were wounded. The war memorials, which are a feature of every corner of our land, are a testament to that sad fact. In Uddingston alone over 70 young men died and we have no record of those who returned wounded in body or spirit.

We can only imagine the sadness in our congregation over the four years as news of each casualty was announced, the 11 men commemorated on our communion table – young men who were well known in the church as were their families. The Roll of Honour in the rack in the hall tells the stories of their war.

Armistice Day in November 1918 must have been a day of real joy and relief in the village, albeit a bittersweet time for so many families. The *Hamilton Advertiser* tells us that the news was received shortly before noon and that "church bells rang out their joyous peals and colliery sirens and steam horns drowned the hurrahs of the crowds". Apparently only the beadle was supposed to ring Park's bell but as he was still at work, his young daughter ran up and rang the bell for all it was worth. Soon there were flags at every window and the shopkeepers handed out bunting so the whole appearance of the village must have changed from sombre to joyful within the hour.



The Uddingston correspondent for the *Advertiser* gives a wonderful description, from first-hand experience no doubt, of the later festivities. He wrote, "In the evening the singing of war songs and bugle sounds were heard everywhere, and one enterprising crowd had an effigy (well done) of the Kaiser raised on a long pole and carried along the principal thoroughfares causing endless booing and utterances of a rather uncomplimentary kind"!! And so ended Armistice Day, November 1918 in Uddingston and the start of the return of our servicemen.

One hundred years later we are proud to remember them.

The Cinnamon Network believes the Church should be at the heart of our communities and it strives to help local churches to make “a positive and transformational difference”. The organisation describes itself as “faith-based but not faith-biased”, because, although motivated by its faith in Jesus Christ, it indiscriminately serves people of all faiths and none. It offers advice, support, leadership training and funding to enable local churches to serve their community. Ian McQuarrie recounts how Park Church is involved in this project.



In 2010, in response to growing social need, 50 Christian CEOs and leaders were challenged to consider how the Christian community could deliver more local transformation. They met at the Cinnamon Club in London and the Cinnamon Network was born. Cinnamon believe that the Church, the body of Christ by the power of the Spirit, can transform communities and to that end seek to enable the local Church to deliver projects which respond to needs in their community.

For the Church to do this effectively, it must gain as clear a picture as it can of the social realities and relationships in the community so that, if possible, it can respond in such a way that it might be a blessing to the community.

In order to achieve this goal, members of St Andrew's Episcopal Church, the Nazarene and Park are presently involved in conducting a community survey. Thus far we have contacted key workers in the community e.g. local politicians, the police, teachers, health practitioners, social workers and representatives of Uddingston Pride and the Community Council.

The information gleaned from these conversations was then used as the basis for a Key Workers' Consultation held on the 11 October to which all those we had spoken to were invited. In truth we approached this meeting with some trepidation, but lead by Diane McWilliam, Cinnamon Advisor in Scotland, we had a really productive gathering which served to further cement relations and sharpen our picture of the community. This was a real answer to prayer and, if you could keep us in prayer as we go forward, this would be an invaluable way for you to participate in the process.

The next stage is less formal as we seek to interact with local “gatekeepers” e.g. shopkeepers, pub landlords and others who have insight into the community. This will further refine our perspectives as to the needs in the community and possible responses.

Once we have completed the survey, there will hopefully be some form of presentation to the community at large.

At every stage thus far we have been careful not to raise expectations by stressing that it is an exploratory process to ascertain what *might* be possible. A realistic awareness of our capabilities is important but so too is a realistic awareness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, The One who said, “Follow me”.

The Cinnamon Project provides a possibility for us to follow Jesus in seeking to engage with our community and be a blessing to them that glory might come to Him.

If you would like to find out more about the Cinnamon Project you can visit the website at www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk

“In my estimation, Cinnamon Network is one of the most exciting Christian initiatives to have arisen in recent years. It has enabled thousands of people of faith to get involved in social action projects on the ground where they live, work and worship.”

**Rev Lyndon Bowring,
Executive Chairman of
CARE**

Life as a Pastor

Nathan Owens was a former assistant here at Park. He is now minister of Maxwell Church Kilmaurs in Ayrshire and here he shares with us how God has been building up this small church over the last three years.

You've been at Kilmaurs for over three years now; how do you see God building up His church in this place?

It has been a great joy to see God at work by His Holy Spirit in Maxwell Church. Probably the most immediate and tangible difference is seen in the people who make up Maxwell Church. My first Sunday was the 4 October, 2015; compare the church then to the church that met on 7 October, 2018 and the difference is quite apparent! There were 16 of us back in 2015, including Steffi and myself and no families. This year there were 65 of us with five families present. But please, don't let your imagination run away too fast! This Sunday was a special Sunday that marked us moving back into our newly refurbished building—we don't have 65 people there every Sunday! On average 30-35 people attend, with 25 on a quiet Sunday and 40-45 on a busy one.

However, God has definitely been at work and done some amazing things. We've seen three people come to faith in Jesus. We've also seen three families become part of our church family. We've seen church members who have attended church for decades but until very recently had never prayed with other people; they have experienced the precious bond of fellowship at our house groups. We've seen people who had drifted away from church come back, people who have never really attended church come to church and the other week a church member overheard someone in the village saying, "you know, I thought that wee church had closed but it hasn't, it's a living church now"!

How important is it for the church to engage with the outside community and how have you gone about building relationships within your neighbourhood?

It's vitally important. It's the mission that Jesus has given his church; to make disciples, and to make disciples we have to make friends. The simplest way to build relationships is to share your life with people, and so I've tried to do this by shopping at my local shop, playing squash and tennis locally. I've joined a community choir. As of yet none of these things have produced "fruit", or rather I should correct that and say, so far only seeds have been sown! One of the other really important things we've been trying to do is to shift the focus of church *outward*. We try to think less about us and our systems, and more about people and how to introduce them to Jesus. One of the ways we're trying to shift the culture in this direction is to move away from a "mid-week Bible Study and Prayer Meeting" to house groups. We now have two, soon to be three, house groups in different areas and these are our new mission stations. These are places we can invite people to because they are in our homes; we have a meal together (that's the plan!), we read the bible together and we share life together. It's an environment into which we can invite people we meet.

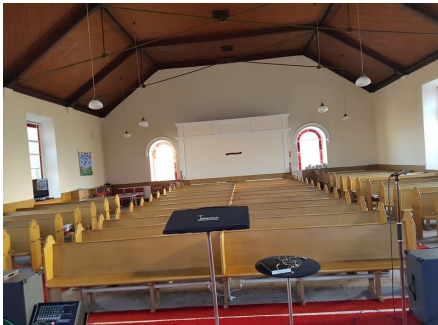
You use social media and technology a lot; what role do you think they have in reaching out to people with the Good News of the gospel?

Social media and technology are tools. They have their uses but like any tool they can also be frustrating and, if used incorrectly, can hinder us rather than help us – like trying to use a spanner to screw in a screw! That being said, I do try and use them as best I can: we have a newly revamped (Feb. 2018!) website www.maxwellchurch.com, we have our Facebook account and an Instagram account. I find Facebook particularly helpful for announcing events and upcoming dates. I have found that I've had a fair bit of interest and interaction via Facebook, with people contacting the church through it.



You have just finished a big refurbishment programme, tell us a little about this.

Our building is another tool to be used for the Great Commission of making disciples. We asked ourselves the question, "Is our building in the best condition to help us in our quest, or do we need to modify it"? We decided it needed to be refurbished in order to make it more flexible, more accessible and more welcoming. So we took out the pews and organ pipes (which were fake and crumbling!), enlarged the stage area, put in a ramp, upgraded the heating, lighting and electrics, erected a new Welcome sign and provided literature, carpeted it all, put in new seats and a new sound and visual system. The end result is a space that is very flexible; there is space for families, for parents and prams, a space for toddlers to run around as well as space for tea and coffee so that people can mingle and interact after the service.



Which aspects of your ministry do you find most challenging?

There's a couple of things that spring to mind. Ministry is an incredibly privileged position that includes things such as greater flexibility in time management, for example, but what that tends to mean is that evenings and weekends get taken up easily! One challenge is drawing appropriate boundaries so that Steffi and I can look after family life as well as church life, even though they are deeply connected and overlap a lot!

Another challenge is the emotional and spiritual toll of walking with people through trials in life, even when they express frustration at the church, or even me.

It's been a big year for you and Steffi becoming parents for the first time! How has parenthood changed you?

Becoming a parent for the first time has been an incredible blessing and gift! Steffi and I are delighted to have Jonathan, and it is a joy to watch him grow and learn every day. Just the other day we found ourselves staring at him for a ridiculous amount of time, all because he had learnt to chew and swallow!

We give thanks to God for all He is doing through Nathan and Steffi's ministry in Kilmaurs and pray He continues to bless this fellowship as they strive to make disciples in their local mission field. May they see much fruit. Nathan has asked us to pray for the following:



For three new families to join us over the next 12 months.



For Paul, as he starts as our new ministry assistant, focussing on Kilmarnock and seeing a new work beginning in Onthank.



For God to do powerful and supernatural things in our own lives, that we would have expectant faith for him to do more and more, for His glory.



Ghanaian Adventures

Shona Burt, along with 14 of her classmates and two teachers, embarked on a volunteering trip to Ghana for a week in June. Shona gives an enthusiastic account of some of the highlights of the trip for her.



We arrived in Accra, the capital of Ghana, on the 1 June and were warmly welcomed by our hosts, Livingstone and Gidi. We drove to our first hotel and it was here that we first noticed how different the conditions were to what we were used to. With dead cockroaches in the drawers, lizards in the rooms, dribbles of water that were our showers and only a small fan in our rooms, we knew we were in for an eye-opening week!

We set off early next morning on our long journey to our next destination, the Volta Region. Our previous bus journey had been in the dark so it was only now that we could see the beautiful and interesting scenery that Ghana had to offer. We passed by the endless stalls selling fruit, fish, jewellery etc and every time the bus stopped in traffic, several vendors would flock to our windows and attempt to sell us something. Another thing that amazed us were the people; especially the women, who carried anything and everything on their heads with only a small cushion type thing helping to balance it. The objects they carried included long rods of metal, boxes of washing powder, baskets of fruit and so on and never once did we see anything get dropped.



The roads in Ghana were crazy, with many 'potholes' that were one foot deep and the width of my height. There were no barriers to stop cars if they veered off the roads going up the hills. Driving was 'every man for himself' and Ghanaians love to use their horn every chance they get, making it almost impossible to get any sleep. Our bus was basic and the doors would often fly open as we went over a bump. We had stacked the suitcases at the back of the bus but when the bus braked harshly, or we went over a bump, a suitcase would topple off the pile and career down the aisle, narrowly missing landing on one of us. During our journey, we stopped at a monkey sanctuary and were able to feed the monkeys bananas out of our hands. Some people were even lucky enough to have the monkey jump on their arms to eat the banana – I sadly, was not one of those.



We finally arrived at our second hotel which was a big improvement on the first one!



The next day we went for an amazing walk in the rainforest; we saw all sorts of different animals, trees and plants that were foreign to our eyes. Our walk led us to Wli Falls, a huge waterfall. Before the trip we had been told that we would not be allowed into any bodies of water; however, since this was freshwater, we were able to wade in in our clothes and stand almost under this beautiful waterfall, a lovely, unexpected surprise! A further four-hour drive took us to our destination, the small town of Woe, where we would be spending the rest of the week.

On the Sunday evening we arrived at the volunteer house in Woe and were greeted by the team of people who worked there, including the men who run *African Adventures*, the cooks and the people who tend to the upkeep of the house. There were also about eight children there and we were told

that these children were orphans who were cared for by the people who ran the house. That night we played games, sang and danced with our new friends and bonded greatly with them. We played songs through our phones and taught them the macarena, the sloss, the dance to the Steps' song '5, 6, 7, 8' and some ceilidh dancing. We taught the children games such as Duck, Duck, Goose, Ring a Ring o' Roses, tig and gave them piggybacks. Although we were exhausted we had an absolutely amazing night getting to know these wonderful people.

The next day we went to the local school to meet the children who all wanted to get a good look at us. We were led to a row of chairs in the 'playground' (a very large area of sand) and everyone gathered round us. The headmaster welcomed us and the celebrations began with some children playing the drums, others singing and a final group performing their traditional dance. Volunteers have nicknamed this '*the chicken dance*' and we were invited to join in. I can't say I ever quite got the hang of it but the children were jubilant at our efforts. The children were dripping with sweat, having put every ounce of effort into performing it perfectly for us.

We were given the choice of spending the day in a classroom observing lessons or doing construction work i.e. moulding bricks which would be used to build a library/ICT room at the school. Children in Ghana have to pay to go to school. As many parents cannot afford to send them until they are older, some start Primary 1 aged 10! My Primary 3 class were aged between 7 to 16. It astounded us to see children almost the same age as us learning basic skills such as calculating how much change you would receive and how to tell the time. We sat on the same small, double benches the children sat on – they were very uncomfortable!

Each child had one exercise book and they could not take any materials home. My pen was a source of wonder to them as they only had tiny pencils, using the lead until the very last inch. They had never heard of whiteboards and markers! The children were engrossed in the lessons and you could see how much they loved school and learning. Some parents can only afford to send their children to school two or three days a week so school is considered a luxury and something that should be cherished. At lunchtime we played with the children. They tied bits of string together to make a large circle which was put around two children's ankles while another child would jump over it. I joined in and every time I stopped to catch my breath, the kids would shout in unison, 'again, again!' Although sweating in the heat, I couldn't bring myself to say no and the joy on their faces was a truly special thing to witness.

I also did some construction work which was physically challenging in the 38°C heat and humidity. We took frequent breaks and worked out a good system. It was very rewarding to see all the bricks we had produced, knowing that we were leaving something tangible behind. We spent Thursday teaching the kids different sports; hockey, volleyball, badminton, rugby and rounders. The kids all enjoyed and it was amazing to learn they had never heard of sports like rugby before!



As well as attending school each day, we would enjoy an organised activity. These trips included a visit to a lighthouse and the beach, a local market and one day we played against a local girls' football team (no prizes for guessing who won that one). We also learned about marriage in Ghana as well as their language, Ewe. On the last night we had a drumming lesson around a bonfire.

My favourite part of the week was playing and interacting with the children. They were amazed by our mobile phones, especially the photos they could take, and loved posing for photos! They would fight to hold our hands and they loved to inspect our hands and fingers. I even felt them feeling the fat on my arms because it was just something that they were not used to!

Saying goodbye was hard as some of the kids were crying but it was heart - warming to see the effect that our visit had had on them. So many of these kids had very little materially but they were so completely happy with their lives. It has really opened my eyes as to how lucky we are and how much we live in excess. I could literally write a book about the week I spent in Ghana; there were so many things that touched me and will stay with me forever. It was a week that I will never forget and all I've thought since I've come back is, "I want to go back"! Thank you very much for reading my story or as they say in Ghana, *Akpe kakaka!*



Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

As we are entering the advent season, it seems appropriate to look at two Christmas carols. We will look at one traditional carol and one of the more modern ones; both help us to understand the significance of the Christmas story.



O Holy Night

This carol is often performed as a solo at Christmas concerts and is a firm favourite because of its haunting melody.

In 1847, a French parish priest commissioned a local wine-merchant poet, named Cappeau, to write a poem for the Christmas Eve mass in his village. Cappeau studied the gospel of Luke en route to Paris and had finished the poem by the time he reached the capital. Cappeau asked his friend, Adolphe Charles Adams, to compose the music and the song was sung for the first time three weeks later at the village's Christmas Eve mass. Known by its French name, *Cantique de Noël*, the song was very popular in the French church until the authorities banned it when they found out the author was a socialist and the music composer a Jew. However, the French people loved it so much they continued to sing it.

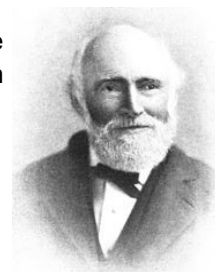
It is reported that on Christmas Eve 1871, in the midst of fierce fighting between France and Germany during the Franco-Prussian war, an unarmed French soldier jumped out of the trenches, walked on to the battlefield and started to sing the first line of the song. He sang all three verses before a German soldier came forward and sang a popular Martin Luther hymn. Fighting stopped for the next 24 hours in honour of Christmas Day. It's amazing to think how a song could stop the war but God used this song to bring about transitory peace.

O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, the night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine!



On Christmas Eve 1906, Reginald Fessenden, a 33-year-old professor, spoke into a microphone and started reading the account of the birth of Christ from Luke's gospel. After he'd finished, he played *O Holy Night* on his violin. It is said to be the first song ever sent through the airwaves!

An American writer named John Sullivan Dwight brought the song to his country during the Civil War. He was an ardent abolitionist and the words of the third verse really resonated with him. Dwight translated the song into English and it quickly became popular in America.



Truly He taught us to love one another,
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains he shall break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
With all our hearts we praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! Then ever, ever praise we,
His power and glory ever more proclaim!

So this Christmas when you hear this song, remember its amazing origins. It was written by a wine merchant poet who left the church, the music was written by a Jew who did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, it stopped war for a day, it was the first music to be broadcast over the airwaves and it brought the issue of slavery to the forefront of American affairs. Surely God's hand was truly in the writing of this song!

To listen to the song [click here](#)

He Shall Reign Forevermore

This song was written by Matt Maher and Chris Tomlin, who wrote *How Great is our God*. Written in 2015, it takes its inspiration from the *Hallelujah Chorus* in Handel's *Messiah* and the old carol, *In the Bleak Midwinter* so if that doesn't intrigue you, nothing will! The song focuses on the incarnation of Jesus as son of the living God and encompasses his life from his birth in a humble manger to his eternal reign, seated at the right hand of God.

The first verse of the song echoes the words of the old carol, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, and depicts the scene of the birth of Jesus. Christ came into a world of darkness, both physical darkness in that it is wintertime which is seasonally a time of darkness, and metaphorical darkness in that he came into a world that was devoid of his light and love. This verse describes the historical moment of Jesus entering into life on earth. His birth brings light into the world; he has given up his throne in heaven and exchanged it for a dark, bleak stable for our sakes.



In the bleak mid-winter, all creation groans
For a world in darkness, frozen like a stone
Light is breaking, in a stable
For a throne.

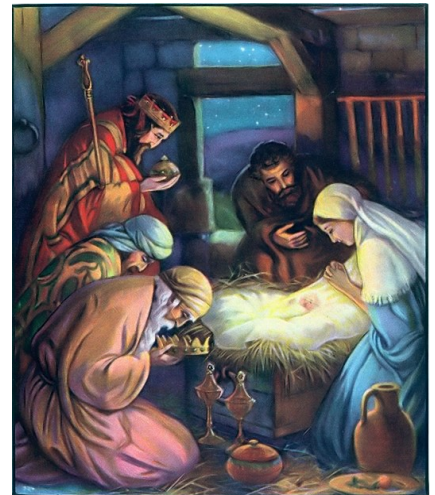
The chorus then echoes Handel's *Messiah* with its cries of King of Kings and Lord of Lords, (Revelation 19:16) and He shall reign forevermore (Revelation 15:15). This chorus declares the unending Kingdom of God, proclaiming that Jesus will reign forevermore!

And he shall reign forevermore, forevermore
Unto us a child is born, The King of Kings and Lord of Lords
And he shall reign forevermore, forevermore.

The second verse returns to the old carol, introducing more characters from the Christmas story that we are so familiar with. The author imagines what he would do if he were there at the birth and realises that all he needs to do is give his heart to the Lord. The same is true for us.

If I were a wise man, I would travel far
And if I were a shepherd, I would do my part
But poor as I am
I will give to Him my heart.

All our hopes are summed up in the third and final verse. The world had been waiting, with bated breath, for the birth of the long-anticipated Saviour, foretold in the book of Isaiah. However, how could this baby be the Messiah? He was fully human, lying as a babe in the manger, and yet also fully divine, the creator of the stars and skies.



Here within a manger lies
The One who made the starry skies
This baby born for sacrifice
Christ, the Messiah
Into our hopes, into our fears
The Saviour of the world appears
The promise of eternal years
Christ, the Messiah

Jesus came as a helpless babe to be a sacrifice for all our sins. He is eternal, the long-awaited Messiah. He reigns to this day as our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. (Is 9: 6-7)

This song encapsulates the Christmas story. It is difficult for us to understand how a mere baby, born in a dirty stable, can be part of God's plan of redemption for the human race. He came to us as a helpless babe, into our messy and chaotic world to give us hope. He is the greatest gift the world has ever known. He is fully God, yet fully man. He is holy, yet humble. He is eternal and for all generations and promises to be with us right to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20) **How great is our God!**

To listen to the song [click here](#)

Entrepreneur and Man of Faith

Ron Hamilton needs little introduction to members of Park Church as he is well known for his warm smile, his welcoming manner and his corny jokes! However, there is a serious side to Ron too. He is the inventor of the daily disposable contact lens and now runs the world's first internet-based "direct from laboratory to wearer" business from his premises in Blantyre. Ron's faith has guided him from an early age and he has kindly agreed to share his life story with us here.



Tell us a little about your early childhood and where you were brought up.

I was born in Mossend, Bellshill, on 13 November 1941. The country was at war and at a very, very, low point, being in real danger of losing. The war's progress would obviously have been of great concern to my parents (and to the nation) but of no interest to me! My childhood memories are, therefore, of a young life forming just after the war ended. My happy memories would have been so different had we lost, but, thank God, we won.

My home was a secure place with Mum, Dad and big sisters, Maureen and Elizabeth. I never went to bed hungry, fearful or unloved. Rationing would continue for a few years, so we were never 'spoiled' but lacked nothing. We played rounders in the street with all our pals late into the evenings until the gas lamp proved inadequate. Our demands were few; the girls enjoyed simple 'props' of skipping ropes and peevers with chalk 'beds' marked out on the pavements. Meanwhile the boys played cowboys, lit grass fires, made bogies using old pram wheels attached to salvaged planks of wood and held together with nails from apple boxes. These precious nails had to be carefully hammered straight, 'ouch', on the back-door step. It was an *Oor Wullie* and *Broons* type of existence. Very happy and secure.

Typically for the time, Mum ran the house whilst Dad was the wage earner. However, we were an unusual family in one respect because my Dad started his own company after the war, and very unusual in another respect, he decided to make curling stones! 'The factory' was an exciting home-from-home for me. It was where I earned my pocket money and where I learned so many skills about 'making things'. I also learned about the relationships between my Dad and 'the men'. I did go to school, but somewhat reluctantly.

My father taught me how to use hand tools and, perhaps naturally, my hobbies also came to revolve around "making things". My 14th birthday present was a full set of wonderful joinery tools. The family had moved to a new house which had some garage space where I could use my tools, making, among other things, guitars, boat-lamps, model diesel engine-powered aeroplanes and model boats to sail in Motherwell boating pond. Here I am, now 77, running a business 'making things', long after sensible folks would have put all that behind them.

You have lived and worked in Canada as well as Scotland; tell us a little about your working life.

Totally against the odds, I passed enough Highers at Uddingston Grammar in 1959 to allow me to study engineering at the Royal College of Science and Technology with practical experience (and some finance) coming from a fantastic Hoover Student Apprenticeship. Also, totally against the odds, just before leaving school, I met a young Grammar school girl and, well, we married soon after graduating. Moya and I have now been married 55 years. We spent two wonderful years living and working in Canada, where Andrew was born, but family ties brought us back to Scotland where Ruth was born.



Work ambitions took us to Co. Durham, then Lancashire, followed by Hampshire before returning to Scotland in 1993 to start my own business using a manufacturing process I had invented. This technology opened up a new market for healthier contact lenses called 'daily-disposables'. In 1996 we sold the business to a large US eye care company. I then had another idea! This time it was to simplify the way to *sell and supply* contact lenses using the internet. Moya and I then re-invested and set up another business from scratch. We named it *Daysoft Limited*. Based in Blantyre, we now use an integrated system to both make and supply millions of contact lenses every month. We sell direct to wearers in 90+ countries.

How did you become a Christian and what does your faith mean to you?

My earliest childhood memories include, as a family, attending regular Bellshill Baptist Church services and then, with my sisters, walking to afternoon Sunday School. I made a personal Christian commitment, aged 13, at a mid-week meeting as the church was preparing the way for the start of the Billy Graham rallies in Scotland in 1955. It was wonderful to learn later that Moya was also a Christian.

We were married in Uddingston Baptist church in 1963, 55 years ago. Each time we moved around the country we always sought out a local church. This experience has shown us that the family to which we belong extends well beyond our local horizons and has given us lifelong friends.

You are a very successful businessman; in what way does your faith impact the way you run your business?

Thank you for saying 'successful'! Firstly, I feel no sense of conflict from exercising my faith and working at developing profitable, competitive businesses. I am ever conscious that one will not necessarily lead to the other. I am also conscious that succeeding in one at the expense of the other will probably lead to failure of both. Helping to create new manufacturing jobs is a great, socially rewarding outcome.

What is your favourite hymn and favourite passage of scripture?

I really like MP 257 *I am not skilled to understand* by Dora Greenwell (1821-82) because in a few, simple, humbling, words she summarises all that those aspiring to be, or confessing to be, Christians, need to *know*. I love the simplicity.

Again, on the theme of simplicity and because it was a favourite Sunday School chorus, I plump for *Romans 10:9* ... as the rhyming opening line says ... '*Romans ten and nine, 'tis a favourite verse of mine*'.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Which bible character do you most identify with and why?

Lydia, a seller of purple cloth from Thyatira. Do please read her great story in Acts 16: 14-15. She was ahead of her time. A *female* entrepreneur, an impressive leader, persuader and follower of God. I am sure she and I will enjoy debating gross margins and production processes!

One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

And one for fun! Given the chance, who would you most like to be for a day?

A true hero for all Scots, Dr Alexander Fleming. In 1945, he shared the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology with Florey and Chain. The award was made "for the discovery of penicillin and its curative effect in various infectious diseases". He changed the world I was born into, making it a much safer place.

We give thanks to God for Ron's own inventive skills and contribution to science and for the Christian values he brings to the business world.



Uddingston Pride Update

We commissioned a new memorial window for the station commemorating the end of World War 1. This was dedicated at a service led by the Rev Bruce McDowall on 17 November. Bobby Keys played a lament on the pipes during this service. The window tells the story of some of the men from Uddingston, and surrounding district, that were killed in combat. It gives a brief but poignant description of their lives, including where and when they fell. We are very grateful for the assistance from the local Masonic Hall for part-funding this project and preparing the text. Members of Uddingston Pride arranged the production and installation. The finished window is an attractive and appropriate addition to the station building and is a fitting tribute to those local lads who lost their lives so that we might enjoy the freedom we have today.



We have been planting Spring bulbs and perennials at the station, all produced and donated to us by the Viewpark Allotment Gardens so many thanks to them. The Junior Section of the Boys' Brigade helped us plant bulbs at the Old Parish Church and grammar school pupils also helped plant bulbs. The Council Community Payback Team replaced the old brick planters with attractive wooden ones at the Community Centre in Bellshill Road and we planted bulbs there which were funded by the centre's management. We look forward to seeing a lovely display of Spring flowers in Uddingston next year!



Our popular annual Christmas Open Day will be held this year on Sunday 2 December. The pipe band will start proceedings at 1.00 pm, and there will follow the usual mixture of activities to entertain all ages. Our Primary Schools' Choir will sing for us in Park Church and our talented young dancers will perform in Bellshill Road. Another highlight will be the superb Salvation Army band, playing all your favourite carols; why not join them and sing along?

For the adults there will be Christmas pies, mulled wine, and fancy goods to buy at the Uddingston Pride Marquee, as well as a tombola and a raffle, all in aid of our group funds. Park Church will be running a café in their church hall, so drop by for a warming cuppa and some home baking.

The Children will enjoy the "Cuckoo in the Nest" competition, and there will be lots of other entertainment and activities for all ages during the afternoon. No Christmas event would be complete without a visit from Santa, and we have been assured he will be there at some time to hand out sweets to all the children he meets.

This is an event that simply must not be missed, so come along, bring the family, enjoy all the fun, and start the Christmas period off with a bang. We look forward to seeing you all that afternoon, please join in and show your support for Uddingston Pride.

by Sandy Robertson

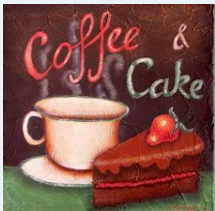
Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal



A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the recent Shoebox Appeal. Around 95 boxes were delivered to the depot for distribution to needy children around the world.

Also thanks go to Sadie Finlayson for arranging the purchase of the ready-made shoeboxes.

Advent and Christmas at Park

Sunday 2 December 	10.30am Holy Communion and Admission of new elders to Kirk Session Village Christmas 1.30pm Primary School Concert Tea Room will be open in Church Hall 1-4pm	 
Sunday 9 December	6.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols - St Andrew's Church	
Sunday 16 December 	10.30am Songs for the Messiah Gift Service for GCM 6.30pm Advent Supper	
Sunday 23 December	10.30am Nativity Play by Park Kids Park Praise will share in leading the service 6.30pm Bield Housing Carol Service	
Christmas Eve	6.30pm Crib Service 7.15-8.15pm Carol singing around the community 11.30pm Watchnight Service	
Christmas Day	10.30am Celebrate the Greatest Gift!	
Sunday 30 December 	10.30am Carols, Cake and Coffee!	
Sunday 6 January 2019	10.30am Epiphany Worship	



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